



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT INVESTS \$67 MILLION IN RURAL NEW HAMPSHIRE

Concord, NH: Jolinda H. LaClair, State Director of USDA Rural Development (RD) for New Hampshire, announced that during Fiscal Year 2006, RD invested \$67,108,140 in New Hampshire through housing, community and business loan and grant programs. "A strong and vibrant economy is critical to the future of rural America," said LaClair. "By connecting RD's resources to the needs of individuals and communities, new jobs have been created, homeownership has increased and families and communities have been strengthened."

Rural businesses in New Hampshire received more than \$1.5 million in guaranteed loans from RD. First Pioneer Farm Credit and First Colebrook Bank worked hand in hand with RD to provide businesses with the funding they needed to start or expand existing businesses, ensuring that jobs would be saved and the local economy would continue to grow. Small and emerging businesses in Hillsborough, Merrimack, Coos, Carroll and Grafton Counties have increased access to loan money as a result of more than \$1 million in low interest loans to two economic development organizations: Capital Regional Development Council and Northern Community Investment Corporation. The organizations will use the money to establish or re-capitalize their revolving loan fund used to make loans to small, rural businesses. An additional \$641,000 in Rural Business Enterprise Grants, Rural Business Opportunity Grants and Rural Community Development Grants was awarded to economic development organizations to provide technical assistance or loans to small and emerging businesses in NH. Fiscal Year 2006 is the first year that grants have been awarded in New Hampshire from the 9006 Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Grant Program. Middleton Building Supply of Middleton, NH received a \$460,943 Renewable Energy Grant to purchase and install a wood boiler heating system. High Standard Inc. of Jaffrey, NH received a \$20,000 Renewable Energy grant to purchase and install a wood pellet furnace system. Weirs Sports Center of Laconia, and Penny Publications of Loudon, NH received \$9,783 and \$8,175 Energy Efficiency Grants respectively to purchase and install energy efficient lighting.

RD is committed to helping New Hampshire residents achieve the American dream of home ownership and to ensure that every New Hampshire resident has access to safe, affordable housing. More than \$44.1 million in loans and grants helped to purchase, repair and construct housing for homeowners and individuals in need of rental units. Two hundred twenty five loans totaling \$34.2 million were made to individuals and families to purchase a new home. \$677,569 was obligated in the form of loans and grants for repair of existing homes. A \$1,000,000 loan was made to construct 30 units of family rental housing in Jaffrey, NH and another \$200,000 to make repairs to 16 units of elderly housing in Canterbury, NH. Residents of RD's rental properties received almost \$8 million in rental assistance to ensure that rents stayed at no more than 30% of a resident's income.

Enhancing opportunities for rural communities to access state-of-the-art technology is a priority for the Bush Administration. The Trustees of Dartmouth College received a \$61,977 Telemedicine Grant for a fetal telemonitoring project. The Exeter Region Cooperative School District received a \$359,563 Distance Learning

Grant to continue their Bi-State Distance Learning Initiative. Last year, the school district received a \$499,330 grant for the project. Monadnock Community Hospital received the only Distance Learning/Telemedicine loan/grant combination in the nation. They will use a \$4,123,636 loan and \$412,364 grant to purchase an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system. The system will provide access to patient information to all clinical staff and healthcare providers. The University of New Hampshire received a \$172,827 Public Television Digital Transition Grant to fund the transition of New Hampshire Public Television's two transmitters in Pittsburgh and Hanover, NH.

Rural Development invested \$740,000 in loans and \$528,401 in grants to assist communities with financing essential community services such as emergency vehicles, ADA accessibility, repairs to cultural and town buildings, and health care facilities. Eleven communities received a total of \$12,790,746 in loans and grants to upgrade their water and wastewater systems. Two Solid Waste Management Grants totaling \$105,000 were obligated to improve the management of solid waste and to reduce the solid waste stream.

Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in Rural America. This is done by providing financial and technical assistance to foster growth and new opportunities for business development, home ownership, and critical community and technology infrastructure. To learn more about USDA Rural Development programs visit the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.